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SUBJECT: G8: MEDVEDEV'S COMING OUT PARTY

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Robert Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶11. (C) MFA First Secretary Mikhail Kokorev told us on July 3 that the G8 summit in Japan would be an important opportunity for Medvedev to establish himself among world leaders, many of whom would have bilateral meetings with the new Russian President. In addition to sessions with the G8 leaders, Medvedev would meet on the margins with many of the non-G8 leaders in attendance and take part in a brief BRIC meeting. Kokorev explained that while the GOR felt it was important to include non-G8 countries in the annual events, expanding the G8 was "premature" and Russia was opposed to the French proposal for the "G13." Russia did not consider the G8 an ineffective talking shop, and saw it instead as an important venue for "elaborating" on ideas and policies, particularly economic and development issues. The GOR did not want the G8 to supplant other international fora, such as the UN and regional organizations, which were better suited to dealing with political issues.

¶12. (C) Kokorov said that Medvedev's priorities for the G8 summit in Japan were following-up on issues that figured prominently when Russia was G8 President in 2006, including expanding educational opportunities in less developed countries and improving medical care. Working from the "concept paper" on expanding international aid and financing for development projects adopted by the GOR in 2008, Medvedev would discuss Russian initiatives to combat malaria and other infectious diseases worldwide, as well as a plan to send Russian education specialists to Africa to assist governments in improving their educational systems, which dovetailed with the U.S. initiative to expand training for African medical workers.

RUSSELL